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ABSTRACT

This reaction paper presented at a conference on compensatory education begins with reviews of three studies prepared for the program and staffing session of the conference and dealing respectively with student-to-instructor ratios, instructional setting, and summer programs. The paper then presents the view that huge gains in achievement will not occur through compensatory education, although small gains are possible. These are probably not additive, and the only substantial gains may be those that occur at the early grades. Early childhood education, where programming is content-laden and rich in diverse experiences, probably yields the greatest payoff. Small class sizes, effective teaching practices, and teacher understanding of learning principles and language development can each contribute to increased learning. Programs to increase self-concept per se probably hurt more than they help; classroom instruction that succeeds in developing learning skills while demonstrating the teacher's positive expectation of the student's ability to learn is the correct emphasis. Pullout instruction is not the right approach. Parent involvement will have a positive effect on programming for all students. Elementary Secondary Education Act Title I programs should be based on better theories of how children learn and how they develop abilities to think. Just teaching reading does not provide content knowledge and real long-term assistance. Attached to this report are summaries of research report findings on pullout programs, summer instruction, parent involvement, and other Austin (Texas) Independent School District programs concerned with compensatory education. Lists of references are included. (PS)

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PROGRAM AND STAFFING STRUCTURES: REACTIONS FROM A QUARTER-CENTURY WORKER IN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

by

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U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
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PROGRAM AND STAFFING STRUCTURES: REACTIONS FROM A QUARTER-CENTURY WORKER IN COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

For more than 25 years I have been professionally involved in one way or another with teaching the children of poverty. In September, 1960, I began my own teaching career in Corpus Christi, Texas, with 25 middle- to low-achieving minority students; by Thanksgiving, 22 migrant students had joined the class. New and inexperienced, I had no idea what had happened. Since 1970 I have been involved in one way or another in program development and research related to Title I and its descendants. Today, in secondary education I am heavily involved in trying to define or design programming to prevent school dropouts--the ultimate place we wind up after massive failures to deal effectively with teaching the disadvantaged.

Parallel to this interest has been one in the research on teaching effectiveness. With the University of Texas Research and Development Center on Teacher Education conducting its research in the Austin schools, I had the opportunity to observe and at times participate in the work of the Center with researchers such as Jere Brophy, Carolyn Evertson, and Gene Hall.

Thus, over the past 25 years I have read much of the literature on both compensatory education and teaching effectiveness. Out of these years of practice, research, and reading I have distilled a number of convictions about educating the students of poverty. I have reviewed the papers in this session from this background and will eventually relate what I see there to those convictions. Let me first comment on the papers.

Harris M. Cooper's Paper: Chapter 1 Programs Reduce Student-to-Instructor Ratios But Do Reduced Ratios Affect Achievement?

Cooper's paper states its purpose as an examination of the research on how student-to-instructor ratio effects influence schooling, with particular attention to how the research relates to low-achieving children. Both class or group size and time-on-task are considered. The paper relies chiefly on conclusions of existing reviews of the literature rather than undertaking a new synthesis of the literature itself.

The paper begins with the first review related to the impact of class size on achievement which was conducted before the turn of the century and considers others which have followed with the rising and falling interest in class size

since that time. The paper then devotes considerable attention to the Glass and Smith (1978) meta-analysis and the subsequent exchanges about that work.

Following this consideration of the relationship between class size and achievement, Cooper turns his attention to the issue of how class size changes may affect the classroom processes. He points out that the Glass and Smith study considers this question only from the perspective of class size differences of 40 and 10, thus being of limited applicability to the usual size class reductions.

Consideration is next given to Cahen's Class Size and Instruction Program study (Cahen, Filby, McCutcheon, & Kyle, 1983) and to the Sustaining Effects Study (Carter, 1984). Here certain enhancements to the classroom are suggested although there did not appear to be an increase in time spent teaching core curriculum material.

Cooper next turns to a consideration of allocated, instructional, and engagement time. Harris concludes that these studies do suggest that compensatory instruction increases the Chapter 1 student time of all three types.

Cooper then takes up the review of studies relating to the relationship between time and achievement. He concludes here that the literature indicates that all three types of time are related positively to learning. He found a general lack of attention in the literature to the relationship between time and attitudes. He goes on to consider that many other classroom variables exist in addition to that of time and points out that the literature would suggest that some of these such as quality of instruction can overwhelm the effects of class size alone.

Cooper concludes then that more is involved in this issue of achievement than class size or learning time.

Francis X. Archambault, Jr.'s Paper: Instructional Setting: Key Issue or Bogus Concern

Archambault in this paper in contrast to that of Harris sets out to do a review of the literature on the effects of pullout versus in-class instruction which he defines here as the effect of instructional setting. To my knowledge this paper represents the most comprehensive review of the literature on this subject. He begins by pointing out that the research has shown quite clearly that Title I provided predominantly pullout instruction and concludes that clear evidence is not present for either pullout or in-class instruction. He

delves into the debate over whether Federal guidelines could be interpreted as mandating in fact, if not in direct regulation, that pullout instruction should be the mode for delivering Title I instruction. Having participated in fights at the state level with Title I program staff to attempt variations on the pullout model because of our lack of achievement gains with that approach, I wish to provide testimony that state level staff were indeed mandating the pullout model. Their reasons had little to do with instructional success, but rather with the ease of accounting which came with staff shut into classrooms or cubbyholes in which they had contact only with "Title I children."

Archambault finds the two most important data sets in the debate to be that of the Emergency School Aid Act third year evaluation (Coulson et al., 1977) and that of the Instructional Dimensions Study (National Institute of Education, 1978). Analyses, secondary analyses, and counteranalyses of these data sets had conflicting results. Other studies with similarly inconclusive additive effects that Archambault reviews include the Sustaining Effects Study (Carter, 1984), Yap's (1983) data from the state of Hawaii, Fitzgerald and Hunt's (1985) Minnesota data, Nearine and Pecheone's (1984) Hartford data, and Knight's (1979a, 1979b, 1979c) New York City data.

Having concluded that no conclusion with confidence regarding the effect of instructional setting on achievement is possible, Archambault next turns to the issue of other effects of instructional setting. Here, he touches on the impact of the student's self-concept; the staff's communication, cooperation, and coordination; the teacher's autonomy and control; content; grouping practices; resegregation; and type of instructor. In the studies reviewed with respect to these effects, Archambault at least finds reason to question both in-class and pullout models on one ground or the other.

Archambault concludes his review by stating that "setting is not directly responsible for student outcomes" (p. III-88) and that, as Leinhardt and Palley have said, it is "the issue of effective practices, not setting, that deserves the attention of educators" (p. III-88). He further states that the effective schools literature might be a good place for us to begin. Unfortunately, having also pursued that literature for help, I think the problems he finds with the instructional setting research are dwarfed by the problem with the effective schools research.

Barbara Heyns' Paper: Summer Programs and Compensatory Education: The Future of an Idea

Heyns finds a dearth of systematic information about summer programs, particularly in recent years. She reviews the Sustaining Effects Study (Carter, 1984) as the only national scale scrutiny of summer programs. This study indicated that district size was the best predictor of the availability of summer programs. In general other data available indicates great variability in the availability of summer programs, types of summer programs, and attendance in summer school. Heyns also touches on the recent court decision in Pennsylvania requiring that handicapped students be provided summer programming and the fact that these decisions may ultimately influence the availability for all students. Heyns goes on to look at the testing issue of "summer regression." This is important because it can explain why a summer program which shows no increase in achievement scores can be considered successful, perhaps, because it prevents too severe regression.

The first two reviews are both comprehensive and satisfactory, drawing on the most well known studies related to student-teacher ratios and instructional setting. Neither review taps into the large body of local school district evaluation studies on Title I and Chapter 1 in any real way although some of Austin's American Educational Research Association (AERA) papers relating to those evaluations and several other school district papers are mentioned by each reviewer. Over the years I have worked with the large city research departments, I have listened to and read countless evaluation reports which have contributed again to my own educational convictions which I will turn to in a moment. Nonetheless, I do not believe that a comprehensive review of those evaluation studies would lead to different conclusions than those researched by Harris and Archambault.

Both reviews also touched on areas outside the field of compensatory education leading me to note that one of the great difficulties in drawing conclusions about this field is the fact that any research related to learning, instruction, human behavior, schooling, organizations, society, and countless other areas is equally important to compensatory education. Too often, we tend to overlook that in designing programs or research related to those programs.

Heyns' review simply takes a look at what is available on summer programs and attempts to elicit some kind of sense of purpose for summer schools. This paper also fails to tap into the large number of public school evaluation studies on summer school, but once again these studies would probably not lead to

substantially different conclusions. What I found missing in the review, however, was the sense of evaluation against some set of expectations for what summer school might give to poor children. The expectation that summer school ought to bring to bear additional instructional time in the education of poor students to equalize their opportunity is a fundamental premise from which I would begin to design summer programs. Because I have not found summer programs to demonstrate substantial achievement improvements, my own conclusion is that we have not yet been able to design programs that achieve the "additional" education required. Indeed, in my own observations, summer programs have spent more time assessing students than teaching them. Teachers are selected anew each year and must get to know the needs of students before they can provide instruction. I believe the key may either be to provide year-round instruction with the same teacher, thus extending the time of instruction, or providing experiences that truly teach new or additional material. In my own opinion, summer programs are a place in which further experimentation is mandatory.

What Does It All Mean?

The reviews have not altered the convictions which I brought to the study of Harris, Archambault, and Heyns. I think these convictions are important because they are indications of the guides to programming that a practicing educator must of necessity derive from research or research reviews. It is not sufficient for me to conclude that results are ambivalent and to go on designing programming as though I were therefore free to ignore the studies. Indeed, I do not even believe the studies have left us in the same place we were in 1965 prior to Title I in terms of our ability to program for educationally disadvantaged students. What then are the convictions from which I do proceed?

There are no magic answers to compensatory education; huge gains in achievement simply cannot occur. However, from each of many improved practices small gains can be achieved. These are probably not additive, however, and the only substantial gains may be those that occur at the early grades. Early childhood education where programming that is content laden and rich in diverse experiences probably yields the greatest payoff. Small class sizes, effective teaching practices, and teacher understanding of learning principles and language development can each contribute to increased learning. Programs to increase self-concept per se probably hurt more than they help; classroom instruction that succeeds in developing learning skills while demonstrating the teacher's positive expectation of the student's ability to learn is the correct emphasis.

I am also convinced that pullout programs are the wrong way to go. Although Archambault is correct that the literature itself is ambivalent, my own observations in Title I classrooms and in the classrooms of the regular teacher with Title I students overwhelmingly demonstrated to me that children were pulled between different learning philosophies and different reading materials. It was repeatedly demonstrated to me that while coordination was preached and proclaimed everywhere it was rarely achieved anywhere. Unfortunately, I am equally convinced that in-class programming is just as impossible. Again, what I observed was an uneasiness on the part of both Title I and regular staff about sharing classroom and authority. It is no easier and time is no more available for planning between teachers with in-class programs than with pullout programs. Where we mandated in-class programming, we repeatedly saw that as soon as our backs were turned the teachers would see that there was a return to pullout programming. This was a primary reason that I saw the Glass and Smith study as an offering of hope. It suggested that there was still a third way in which we might program classrooms for high achievement. Archambault does not consider this as an instructional programming alternative. Yet this study was a key reason for our experiment with the "school-wide project" in Austin. Its components were not only reduced class size, but equally as important the reduction of outside interferences in one teacher's responsibility for the learning of each student. There were no Title I teachers, there were no Title I aides, there was no Title I curriculum, there were no Title I supervisors. These fit my growing convictions that teacher aides from the neighborhood, too many student teachers or volunteers, an excess of non-sequential program materials or reading systems, and conflicting supervision were all actually leading to decreases in the rate of student learning. In the early days of my experience at trying to program compensatory education, I had bought into the notion that there had to be a "critical mass" of support resources. But it seemed more and more obvious as I watched schools trying to manage an excess of resources that while the theory might have validity, the practice was a disaster. Yet, I could also observe that this was not universal. An excellent principal with excellent management skills could overcome almost any programming we mandated. Leading to my further conviction that there are no absolutes in programming just as there are no absolutes in most other things. Excellence in one area can overcome bad practice in another. Learning is complex; teaching is complex; education is complex.

I attach for you a recent compilation from Austin's Office of Research and Evaluation provided to district administrators as an assist to planning for an anticipated heavy cutting siege on our annual budget. Although no longer under my direction, this office is continuing a tradition of trying to summarize

research findings in a way that will impact compensatory and other programming. Across school systems in this country, other offices follow similar practices.

This leads me to a need to state some additional convictions about the impact of Title I requirements on the nation's classrooms that are more subtle than the actual design of the programs.

Accountability

Prior to 1965, the poor child received either the same or, more often, fewer resources than did the middle-class child. Rarely is this true today; through state and local funds the poverty child is usually receiving substantially higher levels of resources. You may recall as I do that some of the first Title I monies were said to have been used illegally in such ways as building a football stadium. This would not happen today because a priority has been created for the educating of poor children.

Systems of district and state testing accountability that owe their origin directly to the requirements of the Federal legislation of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act are now firmly entrenched. As a result few school systems are able to ignore the learning gains of either the poor or any other group of students. This in turn leads to the requirement that compensatory programming either be successful or that it be altered. Moreover, parents are watching this accountability data.

A common attitude in the schools during the early part of the 1960s was that school staff professionals should be left alone by parents to run the schools; parents were regarded as a hindrance. Title I mandates for formal mechanisms to involve parents changed school district thinking about parental and community roles. The required training for the Title I Parent Advisory Committees led to closer examination of school programs by both Title I and other parents. Although a link with today's parent activists and Chamber of Commerce "Adopt-A-School" type programs may not be provable, I maintain that the roots are there and that they have and will make a great difference in the programming we do for all students.

Finally, I have a conviction that somewhere, somehow we missed the boat theoretically in our programming to improve the reading performance of poor children. I have observed program after program "succeed" in teaching children in grade one, and again in grades two, three, and four. Yet children arrive at grades five, six, and later unable to perform. I first felt

that something was wrong about this success when I observed a sixth grader reading a passage about "Bel-gum" in his social studies class. Although he could sound out these letters in the best style of his Title I reading classroom, the fact was that this child had not the least concept of the map of Europe or, indeed, of the concepts of oceans and continents. Reading is not pronunciation skills; it is the grasping of meaning and content without which even pronunciation skills well learned will fail. What this child needed was content knowledge. Unfortunately, I am convinced that our Title I classrooms as well as our basal reading methodologies keep from children that greatest of knowledge acquisition methodologies--wide reading. Nor do we take advantage of today's miracle for learning--videotape. The review papers confirm the greater time Title I students spend in language arts instruction, and our Austin time studies documented that this time came from other subject areas. I am convinced that we must get over the notion that programming the reading classroom to achieve success on the primary tests of reading skills is the way to help the poor child. We must turn to designing classrooms that somehow succeed in cramming vast amounts of content in social studies, science, and literature into the child's basic mental storehouse. I believe in the Chomsky vision of the child's mind as an abstracter of rules and principles from broad exposure to samples of language and knowledge. Therefore, it seems to me that the help we need to give future builders of Title I programs should be proposed practices based on better theories of how children learn and how children develop their abilities to think. I am in effect agreeing with the skepticism of Harris and Archambault about whether the classroom variables we are discussing are the real issue.

AUSTIN INDEPENDENT SCHOOL DISTRICT
Department of Management Information

May 6, 1986

TO: Superintendent and Cabinet

FROM: Glynn Ligon

SUBJECT: More Findings of Interest Related to the Budget

In Monday's budget session, a request was made for copies of ORE findings regarding topics being discussed. Attached are brief summaries of the following issues.

1. "Pullouts" and "Overlaps"
2. "Pullout" vs. "Mainstream" Compensatory Education
3. Summer Instruction
4. Early Childhood Education
5. Changes in Early Childhood Programs that Were Related to Evaluation Findings
6. Parent Involvement
7. Happy Talk
8. Math and Reading Rainbow Kits
9. Instructional Aides

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

"PULLOUTS" AND "OVERLAPS"

ORE Pub. No. 76.62
81.33

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- In 1976-77, AISD students who were served by both Title I and a bilingual program spent significantly less time in reading instruction than did the other groups.
- In 1976-77, AISD students involved in only one pull-out program received approximately the same amount of instructional time as students not served by a pull-out program.
- In 1976-77, students in AISD participated in as many as five special programs concurrently. By 1980-81, the number of students served by more than two compensatory programs had been reduced by 75%.

BACKGROUND:

A larger percentage of Title I students were served primarily in the classroom for 1981-82 than in previous years. It is possible that this change is partially responsible for the program having met or exceeded the objectives at all grade levels except for grade 4.

Glass and Smith (1977) concluded that pull-out programs for Title I students were universal, and that there were no clear academic or social benefits to students from such programs. Such programs "may, in fact, be detrimental to pupil's progress and adjustment to school," the authors concluded.

REFERENCES:

Hester, J. and Ligon, G. Final technical report: ESEA Title I regular program 1976-77. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 76.62), Austin Independent School District, 1977.

Carsrud, K.B. Final technical report: ESEA Title I regular program 1981-82. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 81.33), Austin Independent School District, 1982.

Glass, G. and Smith, M. "Pullout" in compensatory education. University of Colorado, Boulder. Laboratory of Educational Research, 1977.

IMPACT ON STUDENTS

"PULLOUT" VS. "MAINSTREAM" COMPENSATORY EDUCATION

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Pullout has neither academic or social benefits, may be detrimental, and is used to ensure compliance with Title I regulations concerning supplementing as opposed to supplanting regular instruction.
- Pullout appears to be particularly dangerous to children served by multiple programs.
- Children pulled out several times a day are confused by multiple demands and expectations and lose instructional time.
- Students in pullout programs may also suffer from conflict or lack of coordination with the core local program.

BACKGROUND:

In 1978, the National Institute of Education submitted to Congress the final report of a landmark study of the effectiveness of compensatory education programs (NIE 1978). One aspect studied was the relative effectiveness of "pullout" programs, in which children are taken out of their regular classroom to receive supplemental help, and "mainstream" programs, in which they receive this help within the regular classroom.

The study involved 400 classrooms, 100 schools, and 14 districts ranging in size from 5,000 to 240,000 students. The districts were urban, rural, and suburban, contained 4-76% minority students and 42-100% Title I enrollment. Students were measured in reading and math in first and third grades. Findings favored the mainstream setting for all but third grade math, where no difference was found.

A review by the Northwest Regional Educational Laboratory (1981) concluded that

> "Homogenous ability grouping has a negative effect on the achievement, school attitudes, and self-concepts of low-ability students; conversely, heterogenous grouping of these students has a positive effect on these outcomes. The evidence in support of this hypothesis is very strong."

While the NREL review did not look at pullout vs. mainstream progress per se, it does suggest that schools should be cautious in singling out low achievers in a conspicuous way.

SUMMER INSTRUCTION ORE Pub. No. 81.51

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- A large part of the achievement gap between low-income students and others appears to arise during the summer.
- Summer instruction has traditionally been ineffective in closing the gap, and several possible reasons can be hypothesized.
- Summer instruction holds promise for affecting achievement because it provides instructional experiences at a time when none or few are normally provided.

BACKGROUND:

Summer appears to be a crucial time in the education of children from low-income families. These students generally achieve at a lower level than students from families with higher incomes, and the size of the achievement gap increases with each school year. Work by Heyns (1978) indicates that as much as 80% of the increasing gap can be attributed to differences in achievement growth during the summer. During the school year, the rate of growth is about the same for both groups of students. However, during the summer, higher income students continue to gain, but lower income students tend to maintain the same achievement level. As a result, the gap widens. More recent work by Hoepfner (1980) suggests that the school year is more important in producing the gap than Heyns reported; i.e., less than 80% of the increase in the gap occurs during the summer. Nevertheless, differences in achievement gains which occur during the summer remain significant.

In addition, summer would appear to be crucial to closing the gap because there are few educational activities competing for students' time.

However, the research does not support the effectiveness of traditional summer school programs in closing the gap. Why? While many potential reasons come to mind, several appear to be more plausible than others.

1. The course of instruction is too short--three to six weeks.
2. The amount of instruction per day is too short--two to four hours.
3. Given the short duration, teachers do not have sufficient time to know the students.
4. The discontinuity between the regular school year and summer school in school rules, procedures, and the content of instruction is too great.

These possible reasons suggest inadequate planning and/or inadequate resources. Without good planning and sufficient resources, we cannot know the extent to which summer instruction can help close the achievement gap.

An alternative would be to provide year-round instruction with one- or two-week vacations scattered throughout the year. Intersession periods could be used to provide additional instruction. Perhaps the breakup of the concentrated 12-week summer period into multiple short vacations would assist learning. However, we do not have any information on the effectiveness of such an approach.

REFERENCES:

Curtis, J., Doss, D., and Totusek, P. Improving achievement for pupils of low socio-economic strata: The gamble we must take. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 81.51), Austin Independent School District, 1982.

Heyns, B. Summer learning and the effects of schooling. New York: Academic Press, 1978.

Hoepfner, Ralph. How important is summer school? Educational Leadership, 1980, 38, 80-82.

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- An effective prekindergarten program can lead to a 50% reduction in later special education placement, as well as some reduction in grade retention.
- There is evidence that prekindergarten can lead to a substantial reduction in dropout rate.
- Preschool can affect achievement test scores and attitudes toward school.
- A cost-benefit analysis of a Michigan program showed that because of reduced special education costs and participants' greater expected lifetime earnings, prekindergarten more than paid for itself.

BACKGROUND:

After early optimism, compensatory early childhood education programs fell into disfavor in the early 1970's after initial evaluations seemed to show that their educational benefits wore off after a couple of years.

In recent years, however, the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies has coordinated efforts to assess the long-term effects of programs conducted in the 1960's; they have done a "meta-analysis" of eleven independently conducted projects of high quality, using a variety of outcome measures. Their reports as well as results reported by the Perry Preschool Project in Ypsilanti, Michigan and other locally conducted studies, indicate long-term benefits for the participants and for society.

REFERENCES:

Lazar, I. and Darlington, R. Lasting effects of early education: A report from the Consortium for Longitudinal Studies. Monographs of the Society for Research in Child Development, 1982, 47 (2-3, Serial No. 195).

Schweinhart, L. J. and Weikart, D. P. Young children grow up: The effects of the Perry Preschool Program on youths through age 15. Monographs of the High/Scope Educational Research Foundation, 1980 (No. 7).

80.40
81.26

CHANGES IN EARLY CHILDHOOD PROGRAMS THAT WERE RELATED TO EVALUATION FINDINGS

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- After extensive observations and comparison of test results, which indicated Title I students got more instructional time and made greater achievement gains than did migrant students, the decision was made to implement the Title I curriculum in migrant classes and provide more and more coordinated instructional supervision to migrant teachers.

- Aides were eliminated when funding cuts were inevitable. Previous research had indicated aides were not of instructional benefit.

BACKGROUND:

Extensive observations indicated that there were differences between the Title I and Migrant Early Childhood classes - most importantly - there was more instructional time in Title I classes and Title I teachers were more often responsible for instruction that were migrant teachers (they shared responsibility more with their aides). Also the Title I students made greater gains on the Tests of Basic Experiences (TOBE) than did the Migrant students. These findings influenced the decision to change the curriculum used in the Migrant Program to that used in the Title I classes. It was also decided that the Migrant classes needed more instructional supervision, so one person became the Early Childhood Coordinator for both Migrant and Title I.

Since both programs faced funding cuts for the 1981-82 school year, and priority was on keeping teachers, aides and student helpers were cut. The rationale for this came, to a large degree, from previous ORE research (as well as other national research) that indicated aides did not increase instructional time nor achievement. The class size was decreased to 16 students. Although not directly comparable, the achievement results from 1980-81 and 1981-82 indicate that students did not suffer an achievement "setback" without aides. Teachers did however not like the aides being removed.

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Totusek, P., Final technical report: ESEA Title I Migrant 1979-80. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 79.09), Austin Independent School District, 1979.

Christner, C., Final technical report: Title I Migrant 1980-81. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 80.40), Austin Independent School District, 1980.

Christner, C., Final technical report: Title I Migrant 1981-82. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 81.26), Austin Independent School District, 1981.

PARENT INVOLVEMENT ORE Pub. No. 77.02

MAJOR FINDINGS:

There are four ways a parent can be involved in educational programs.

- As a tutor: helping his/her child with specific skills at home
- As a paraprofessional: working as an aide, either as a volunteer or as paid staff
- As an active member of the parent advisory council or parent-teacher organization: in an advisory capacity
- As a learner: attending workshops and training sessions offered by the program

It is relatively easy to measure the degree of parent involvement in any of the four capacities, but it is very difficult to measure the impact of parent involvement alone on student gains for the following reasons:

- Parent involvement changes in a program often occurs at the same time that other changes are implemented, and it is difficult to separate their effects
- Although it is clear that children whose parents are involved perform higher, it has not been empirically proven that increasing parent involvement as a learner, paraprofessional, or advisor increases children's achievement gains
- Reaching parents at home seems to be more effective than expecting them to come to school
- Alternative methods of reaching parents are needed: notes to parents do not always reach them or are not always read or understood

BACKGROUND:

There are many theoretical papers that advocate parent involvement. Empirical data on the effect of parent involvement on achievement, however, are not only scarce, but inconclusive. (Stanford Research Institute, 1973 and Crosset et al., 1972) Studies measuring more general outcomes agree that attitudes and morale of program staff, parents, and students are higher when parent involvement is higher (Brophy, et al., 1975).

McKinney (1975) reports that parents tutoring their children at home produce higher scores in reading and math and a "much more positive attitude" towards school. He also points out that parent involvement in a tutoring capacity is more likely to occur using school representatives visiting the homes, as opposed to expecting parents to come to the school.

Although it is often said there is a lack of interest on the part of the parents, other reasons could be the cause of low achievement. (Shadick, 1970)

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Matuszek, P., and Holley F. Interim report: Review of research in parental involvement in education. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publication number 77.02), Austin Independent School District, July, 1977.

83.29

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT ORE Pub. No. 79.23

HAPPY TALK

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Happy Talk produced achievement gains with minimal instructional activities.

BACKGROUND:

One program that was successful in improving achievement was the Happy Talk early childhood program. In this program paraprofessionals visited the homes of four-year-olds to model an educational activity with the child for the child's mother. The activity used a toy or book as a prop. The parent was to repeat the activity with the child during the week. The next week another activity was modeled.

In the final year of the program, students were randomly assigned to participate or to be control students. The Peabody Picture Vocabulary Test was given to the students before and after the instruction. The results showed that participants made greater gains than control students.

This program provided minimal instructional activities, yet it produced a significant achievement gain. The results support the notion that gains or benefits are readily obtainable from compensatory programs when they provide educational opportunities where few exist rather than attempt to significantly improve existing experiences.

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Doss, D., Final technical report: ESEA Title I regular program 1979-80. Austin, Texas: Office of Research and Evaluation (Publica- number 79.23), Austin Independent School District, 1979.

83.29

PARENTAL INVOLVEMENT

ORE Pub. No. 80.71
81.26
82.37

MATH AND READING RAINBOW KITS

MAJOR FINDINGS:

- Chapter 1 and Migrant parents report their top priorities to be working with their children at home in reading and in math.
- No discernible achievement advantage has been found for Kit participants when compared with a similar group of nonparticipants.
- Although no achievement advantage has yet been found, parents have been highly positive about receiving the Kits.

BACKGROUND:

Both the Math and Reading Rainbow Kits were developed in response to surveys of Chapter 1 and Migrant parents indicating their top priorities were working with their children at home in reading and in math. There is a math and reading Rainbow Kit for each grade level (K-6) focusing on the essential competencies.

Analyses done (by grade level) on the math/reading scores of students who received the Kits compared to similar students who did not receive the Kits revealed no greater achievement gains for the students receiving the Kits.

Although there have yet to be measurable achievement advantages for Rainbow Kit participants, parents have been highly positive about receiving the Kits. Also parents' expressed priorities are still to be helped in working with their children on reading and math at home, and these Kits are directed at these needs. Therefore the Kits may be an effective parental involvement tool even if, thus far, no discernible achievement increases have been measured.

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